



Foundation Document Overview

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

Washington, DC



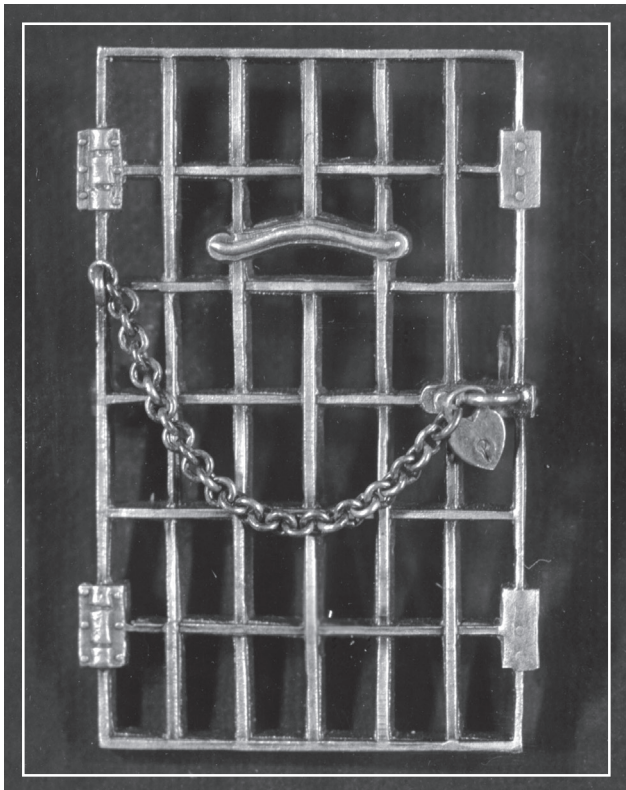
Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of BELMONT-PAUL WOMEN'S EQUALITY NATIONAL MONUMENT is to preserve and interpret the historic headquarters and story of the courageous activism of the National Woman's Party and the community of women committed to political, social, and economic equality, in order to inspire and engage current and future generations.



Significance

Significance statements express why Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The National Woman's Party, founded in 1916-1917, strategically selected its headquarters at 144 Constitution Avenue, NE in 1929. Blocks from the United States Capitol, this location served as the staging ground in the battle for women's equality—a legacy that endures today at the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.
- The National Woman's Party continues to own and curate one of the largest collections related to women's suffrage and equal rights, including the first feminist library. This collection reflects the innovative political strategies and tactics that reinvigorated the suffrage movement and became a blueprint for civil rights organizations and activities throughout the 20th century and beyond.
- The National Woman's Party, from its fifth and final headquarters, systematically targeted more than 600 pieces of discriminatory legislation. Its efforts resulted in more than 300 legislative changes affecting such citizenship rights as marriage, divorce, and custody laws, jury service, property rights, women's ability to enter into contracts, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Alice Paul, founder of the National Woman's Party and one of most influential leaders in the women's rights movement of the 20th century, was instrumental in the final phase of the campaign for the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote. She then authored the unsuccessful Equal Rights Amendment, dedicating the rest of her life to its passage and to worldwide equality for women.
- The Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, as the National Woman's Party headquarters, was created by women for women as an empowering tactical center and home from which to provide an active global forum for women to learn, mentor, and express their civic voice.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Belmont-Paul House and Grounds**
- **Ongoing Work of the National Woman's Party at this Location**
- **Partnership with the National Woman's Party**
- **Education and Scholarship About Women's Equality**

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Location on Capitol Hill**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Community of women**
- **Action through legislation**
- **Non-violent civil disobedience**
- **The role of the National Woman's Party**

Three additional interpretive theme areas under consideration include:

- **Women's movement history**
- **Minorities in the suffrage movement**
- **International influence of the National Woman's Party**



Description

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument was dedicated in 2016 to honor the work of a community of women who created the National Woman's Party, a guiding influence in the fight for women's political, social, and economic equality, not just in the United States but also internationally. Shaped by the leadership of Alice Paul and bolstered by the financial support of Alva Belmont, the National Woman's Party played a defining role in securing passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. In 1922, Paul reorganized the National Woman's Party with the goal of eliminating all discrimination against women. In 1923, Paul wrote the Equal Rights Amendment and launched what would be for her a lifelong campaign to win full equality for women. After moving its headquarters several times from 1913-1928, the National Woman's Party, with help from Belmont, purchased the house at 144 B Street, NE (later renamed Constitution Avenue, NE), transforming the house into the national and international headquarters for the organization. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Paul and other members of the National Woman's Party drafted more than 600 pieces of legislation in support of equal rights.

Today the house from which members of the National Woman's Party tirelessly worked to advance women's equality has been designated as a national monument under the stewardship of the National Park Service. As part of the National Mall and Memorial Parks administrative unit of the National Park Service, the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument honors and commemorates the fight for women's equality as part of our national consciousness and a core American ideal.

